

Safeguarding 7-minute briefing: Child on Child abuse

Find 'hotspots'

Mapping school hotspots with children e.g. noting where children feel less safe, where incidents of aggression or bullying have taken place will provide insight when creating risk assessments and policies. Locality mapping will also support the identification of areas of concern. Speak to all children and listen to their views on – give them their right to talk. Once identified, by adults and children these should always be on the radar of staff and the hotspots list updated when new incidences occur.

What can we do?

School can be proactive in challenging abusive behaviour amongst its cohort by listening to young people, creating a child centred behaviour and relationships policy. Settings can also promote and develop a culture of openness providing systems and ways to support pupils to share their worries, being clear about who they can go to what will happen if they do share a worry. For all of the above, gathering the pupil's views and opinions is vital.

Signs to look out for

- absence from school or disengagement from school activities
- physical injuries
- mental or emotional health issues
- becoming withdrawn – lack of self esteem
- lack of sleep
- alcohol or substance misuse
- changes in behaviour
- inappropriate behaviour for age
- abusive towards others
- going missing/staying out late
- change in peer groups

[Click here for quiz](#)

Important

It is important that all staff in settings know and are aware of the signs and symptoms of peer on peer/child on child abuse and take disclosures seriously. It is wrong to dismiss peer on peer abuse as 'children just being children' or as 'banter'.

What is child on child abuse and who is affected?

Children can abuse other children. It can happen in a wide range of settings wherever children attend be that school, a youth club, the park, their local neighbourhood; even online. But it very often goes unseen. It is a complex situation, all involved are victims. Very often the abuser, the perpetrator is also the victim. It cannot be solved by just one single agency. It often requires the expertise and time of many professionals working together with both the victim, the 'abuser' and their families.

What can it include?

Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying); abuse in intimate personal relationships between children; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse); sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)

What can it include?

Consensual image sharing - might not be abusive – but need to know it is illegal- whilst non-consensual is illegal and abusive; Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party; upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals/ buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress; initiation/hazing type violence and rituals - activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation which initiates a person into a group and may include an online element).

